

## **BRAC IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY – OCTOBER 21, 2008**

- John Carman called the Committee to order at 7:30 p.m.
- Phil Alperson provided the following updates:
  - On September 17, 2008, the Senate passed the FY2009 Defense Authorization bill, which includes language to clarify how the Defense Access Road program should apply to urban areas like Bethesda. This language was not included in the final version of the bill that became law, but the sense of the Senate is another sign of support for federal involvement in mediating Bethesda BRAC traffic. **The language is attached.**
  - On Sept. 24 the House of Representatives approved the Fiscal Year 2009 Defense Appropriations bill as part of a very large Omnibus spending bill (HR 2638). The bill was signed into law on September 30. The Defense bill includes a provision that would prevent the BRAC-mandated closure of Walter Reed Army Medical Center (for at least one year) and its relocation to Bethesda and Fort Belvoir. At the same time, the bill allows the Secretary of Defense to waive this provision if he certifies to Congress that moving forward with BRAC is in the national interest. While it is likely that Secretary Gates will invoke the waiver provision and allow BRAC to proceed, the sense of Congress regarding the project – especially the need to act on BRAC impacts on the local transportation network -- is compelling. **Attached is an explanatory statement from the House Appropriations Committee, which is highly critical of the “total lack of adequate planning and design,”** over \$740 million (and rising) in cost overruns, and that “the Department of Defense and the community have yet to solve how ingress and egress will be affected to support a facility for which the daily population of patients and staff will increase by over 4,000 individuals.”
  - On October 14, the President signed into law S.3001, the FY09 Defense Authorization bill. This is different from the Appropriations bill. The bill has very specific language dealing with the design and construction of the new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda and the new military hospital at Fort Belvoir. The bill sets certain design and review benchmarks that could affect the Sept. 2011 deadline for completion of these projects. **The language is attached.**
  - A meeting on Capitol Hill on October 3 included a conversation with Congressman Dutch Ruppersberger about the unique traffic situation in Bethesda caused by BRAC and the need for federal funding for the Metro entrance, intersection improvements and other transit projects. He is a member of the Appropriations Committee and represents a Baltimore-area district that includes both Aberdeen Proving Grounds and Fort Meade.

- On October 14, Phil and John Carman attended a Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce meeting with MDOT Secretary Porcari. He said it is likely that some portion of the intersections project will be completed by Sept. 2011 but could not say how much or which parts. How much of the project can be completed is hindered by budget constraints.
- Montgomery County non-profits have received BRAC-related job training grants. Last month the MD Dept of Labor, Licensing & Regulations (DLLR) announced \$600,000 in BRAC-related grants, including some that directly relate to Montgomery County:
  - \$99,250 to Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind to form a work force development program for the visually impaired;
  - \$100,000 to Lockheed Martin for a BRAC employee training and development program;
  - \$100,000 to Monster Government Solutions to create a Web site for Maryland military families;
- The Federal Highway Administration is still considering the DAR request relating to the Metro entrance. Due to unusual nature of this project – all other DAR requests pertain directly to road widening or expansion, not transit station – the request needs continued review by WMATA and other state agencies before a decision on DAR certification can be made. This is a “no news is good news” scenario.
- Ollie Oliveria provided updates from NNMC.
  - He was pleased to announce the arrival of a baby boy for Jeff Miller, NNMC’s Transportation Program Manager, and his wife!
  - Ollie provided a follow-up to last month’s report about efforts by the prime contractor to control unauthorized subcontractor traffic in the surrounding neighborhoods – the contractor has hired a security company to monitor and identify such traffic so controls can be implemented. He also requested that the County post signs prohibiting construction traffic in those neighborhoods.
  - The Master Plan is still being revised, but because the September 2011 deadline looms large NNMC has formally submitted the current draft to the National Capital Planning Commission. NCPC will not approve a Master Plan until it can review a comprehensive final version, but has approved the construction of the first new patient garage. NNMC hopes to achieve NCOPC approval of the Master Plan by February.
  - Helicopter noise has been an issue. Recently, helicopters not having official business with NNMC were in the area. NNMC is looking into this.

- Andy Scott of the State Highway Administration reported that the intersections project design phase moves forward, as discussed at the September meeting. SHA anticipates public meetings early in 2009.
- Ilaya Hopkins presented a proposal on behalf of the Coalition of Military Medical Center Neighbors (CMMCN), to develop “A Vision for the National Medical Center Area.” The intent is for BIC to help develop and recommend a series of long-term concepts that would allow transportation projects to be implemented within a broad, unified context. Other community groups, such as the Chamber of Commerce, Bethesda Urban Partnership, NIH and Suburban Hospital could participate. This proposal, which is attached with this meeting summary, is expected to be a major topic of discussion at the next BIC meeting in November. **A one-pager is attached.**
- John Carman asked for the Committee’s approval of the letter to County Executive Leggett that had been discussed at the September meeting regarding BIC recommendations on the NNCM Master Plan. **The letter was approved and is attached with this summary.**
- Robin McElhenny headed a delegation from WMATA (Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority) to discuss the Medical Center Metro entrance study that WMATA is conducting for MDOT. **The WMATA PowerPoint is attached.** The purpose of the project is to enhance transit use, promote pedestrian safety, and reduce traffic/pedestrian conflicts that contribute to congestion along MD355. Currently, approx. 70% of employees who use the Medical Center Metro station are bound for NIH; the remaining 30% for NNCM; under BRAC those figures are anticipated to be 67-33%. The figures do not represent patients or neighborhood residents. Four concepts are being studied: 1) A series of pedestrian access and safety enhancements coupled with increased shuttle bus service to the NNCM campus without constructing a separate entrance; 2) Elevators on the east side of MD 355 descending approx. 110 feet to the Metro platform; 3) Elevators on both sides of MD355 descending 25 feet to a mid-level pedestrian tunnel and to existing west side elevators to the platform; and 4) A pedestrian overpass that is not separate from the entrance to the Metro station. Factors affecting decisions about the project include: cost and availability of funds; usage and cost-effectiveness of the various designs; geological and infrastructure constraints; security at NNCM and NIH; location of Kiss-and-Ride drop offs near the station; and integration of shuttle service and other Transportation Management Plans still being developed by NNCM. There was much discussion among the Committee; WMATA is utilizing the BRAC Committee as its public sounding board and hopes to make a follow-up presentation to the Committee within the next two or three months.
- NOTES: Ollie Oliveria warned the community to expect traffic and noise due to an emergency drill on NNCM grounds on October 30. Patrick O’Neill announced that the BCC Chamber will host a small business/Navy contracting expo at the Bethesda Library the morning of November 6. John Carman solicited comments from the audience. There were none.

- The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m. The next scheduled meeting will be Tuesday, November 18, 7:30 p.m. at the BCC Services Center.

**Committee members in attendance, September 16, 2008:**

Phil Alperson, County BRAC Coordinator  
 Jon Alterman and Ed Krauze, Bethesda-Parkview Citizens Association  
 John Carman, Committee Chairman  
 Dave Dabney, Bethesda Urban Partnership  
 Leslie Weber for Brian Gragnolati, Suburban Hospital  
 Ilaya Hopkins, East Bethesda Citizens Assn.  
 Janet Maalouf, Maplewood Citizens Assn.  
 Deborah Michaels, Glenbrook Village Homeowners Association  
 George Milne, Stone Ridge School  
 Patrick O'Neil, Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce  
 Lulu Gonella for Michael Plantamura, Chevy Chase View  
 Andy Scott, MDOT  
 Geoff Biddle for David M. Smith, Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board  
 Paul Thaler, Locust Hill Citizens Association  
 Melanie Wenger, Montgomery County Intergovernmental Relations  
 Dan Wheeland, NIH  
 Dennis Yoder, SHA/MDOT

**Ex-officio:**

Ken Reichard (Sen. Ben Cardin)  
 Joan Kleinman (Rep. Chris Van Hollen)  
 Delegate Bill Bronrott  
 Miti Figueredo (Council Member Roger Berliner)  
 David "Ollie" Oliveria, NNMC BRAC Program Manager  
 Capt. Daniel Zinder, Deputy Commander NNMC

**Other attendees**

Sara Benson, WMATA  
 Gerald Cichy, Maryland Transit Administration  
 S. Dean  
 Bill Gallagher, KGP Design Studio / WMATA  
 Jessica Juriga, PB / WMATA  
 Kristi Kelly, JTF CapMed  
 Juvonnie Kinchen-Schneider, NNMC  
 Robin McElhenny, WMATA  
 Sara Morningstar, Montgomery County  
 Mal Rivkin  
 Nick Schmidt, PB / WMATA  
 Shondell Towns, JTF CapMed  
 Andrew Ujifusa, Gazette Newspapers  
 Julie Woepke, MD DBED, Office of Military and Federal Affairs